



March 2002

"Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons!"

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK, 17-23 MARCH 2002

According to the Poison Prevention Week Council, some 30 children die every year due to accidental poisonings, and approximately 1 million phone calls are placed to Poison Control Centers annually by adults seeking help when children have swallowed something harmful. In an effort to prevent such tragic events, on September 16, 1961 (P.L. 87-319) the U.S. Congress established National Poison Prevention Week. Shortly thereafter, the Poison Prevention Week Council was organized to coordinate this annual event.

Many poisonings happen when adults are distracted for just a few moments by the telephone, doorbell, or something else. Unfortunately, it also only takes a few moments for a small child to grab and swallow something that could be poisonous. This is why adults must make sure that household chemicals and medicines are stored away from children at all times, and that they know what to do if kids swallow something that they are not supposed to.

To help prevent accidental poisoning:

- ▲ Never refer to medications as "candy", children may think other medications are candy and try to sneak some when an adult is not looking.
- ▲ Ask your pharmacist to put child-resistant caps on all of your prescriptions.
- ▲ If you carry any medications in your purse, even aspirin, never leave your purse where a small child can get into.



- ▲ When discarding old medicine bottles, dispose of any pills or liquid left in the bottle by flushing them down the toilet or down the sink.
- ▲ Store medicine and other poisonous substances in your top cabinets where children cannot reach them. If your children are old enough to climb onto the counters, install safety latches.
- ▲ Lock dangerous substances — alcoholic beverages, cleaning and laundry supplies, medications (including vitamins and nonprescription drugs), bug spray, and pesticides — in upper-level cabinets.

